

December 23, 2005

Jeff Ottesen, Director
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Division of Program Development
3132 Channel Drive, Room 200, Mail Stop 2500
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Mr. Ottesen:

We are in the tourism business at Denali Park. In that role, we interface with visitors to Alaska all the time and realize how important it is for the state to have an appropriate public face at Tok that welcomes visitors to the state and helps them plan for their time in Alaska.

We understand that the new visitor center planned for Tok is no longer listed in the draft 2006-2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Alaska Highway and Rest Area. For over five years the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Northern Regional Office of the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Commerce and Community Economic Development have planned and designed a new visitor facility. It is to serve as an Alaska Public Lands Information Center, a refuge visitor center, and a rest stop/trip planning facility for travelers. Because of its shared federal, state, and local commitment and the fact that funding is available for land acquisition, it is unfortunate that this project is being kept from moving forward.

The visitor center must be identified in the STIP to be eligible for construction funding. Therefore, we urge you to reinstate the Tok Interagency Public Lands and Rest Area Facility in the 2006-2009 STIP.

Sincerely,

Wallace and Jerryne Cole

Wallace and Jerryne Cole
Denali Park, Alaska

